7: Thompson--363 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 101, 131, 621

"Laos is a ribbon of a country stretching from Cambodia to the Yunnanese frontier, and entirely dominated by the Mekong River. That great waterway is so imperfect a means of communication that the geographic diversity of the country and its peoples has free rein. Laos is covered with muongs or totally independent village groups. They have only been united under either a powerful neighbouring state like Siam or Cambodia, or when the two strongest among them--the principalities of Luang-Prabang and Vientiane--had kings energetic enough to achieve a confederation."

7: Thompson--369 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 621, 647

"As in Cambodia, the Laotian Protectorate was an immense success because it floated gently on top of the old native administration, giving an appearance of modernization to what had always existed and with which it did not interfere. The identical organization of all the muongs was a great help to the French. If the government of the Annamite countries erred on the side of over-direct administration, that of the Indianized countries was criticized as too superficial. Laos, it was said, had administrators but no administration. They collected taxes which had no accurate basis of assessment, received the semi-annual oath of functionary fidelity, and requisitioned labour and provisions. The native chieftains remained the real administrators, but no effort was made to select, train, and supervise the most able among them, or to give them regular salaries, and no longer let them take a percentage of the taxes and fines. Little was done, and that little was for the benefit of the few Europeans in the country."

7: Thompson--375-376 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 147, 461, 464, 621

"Labour, as is the case in so many tropical countries of great potential wealth, is the second greatest need. The Laotians' inadequacy, both numerically and psychologically, combined with the country's inaccessibility are almost insuperable obstacles to industrial or commercial progress. This was plainly seen when Laos's vast mineral wealth, especially in tin, attracted capitalist investment in the discreditable wave of mining speculation that spread over Indo-China in the late [376] 1920's. The Laotians have no sense of time, and a thousand obstacles and superstitions interfere with the accomplishment of work at a fixed date. Their physical stamina is not proof against epidemics, especially those maladies brought from foreign countries. Whole villages displace themselves at the slightest provocation. One Laotian proverb says: 'At the end of three days change your house; at the end of three years change your village.' What started as a necessity to escape invaders or soil exhaustion has become a habit, and a means of escaping any regular irksome task. The ease with which the Laotians drift across the Mekong into Siamese territory makes the French authorities very loath to take strict measures with them. Moreover, the European residents themselves, who would normally be the motive force behind any change, succumb to the prevailing atmosphere of su-su, the Oriental equivalent of dolce far niente."

7: Thompson--371 [2] J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 101, 174, 621

"The origin of the Laotian people is the object of much speculation. In all probability they were driven southward from Thibet and China in successive waves. They were and are to-day governed by petty chieftains and divided into families, each of which forms a community under the authority of the eldest son of its most ancient branch."

51: Nguyen Quoc Dinh--52 S-3 (no date) 1941 Laotians
116, 621 Chinese

Laos was the last country in Indochina to be taken by France. This territory had been claimed continually by the kings of Annam and Cambodia on the one hand, and by the kings of Siam on the other. France, defending the sovereign rights of the countries it protected, intervened in Laos in 1883 and established a protectorate there, in spite of the Siamese claims, which was finally made official by the Franco-Siamese treaty of October 3, 1893, and the treaty of February 13, 1904, in which Siam gave up its former claims (36).

(36) Galembert, op. cit.

Therefore, all measures of reorganization were taken much later in Laos than they were in the other countries. There was only one law about Asiatic foreigners which appeared January 7, 1919, and which dealt with the Chinese congregations. This delay can also be explained by the small number of Chinese living in this territory, and by the fact that their position did not attract the attention of the authorities at an early date.